

CO Provincial Legislature Question Period Transcript for Thursday, October 26, 2017

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Please see attached Cabinet Office's Transcript of Provincial Question Period for Thursday, October 26, 2017.

MCI received a question of interest. MPP Nathalie Desrosiers asked a question to Min. Laura Albanese about Islamic Heritage Month and Ontario's anti-Islamophobia motion. Min. Albanese talked about the contribution of the Muslim community to Ontario and the importance to the government of combatting Islamophobia.

MSA did not receive any questions of interest.

Official opposition questions were on a number of topics including autism services, hydro rate reductions and correctional services. NDP Questions today long-term care homes, autism services and correctional services.

The official Hansard will be available later today by clicking on the link below.

http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/house-proceedings/house_proceedings_home.do?locale=en

From: Stinson, Jeffrey (CAB)
Sent: October 26, 2017 12:07 PM
To: @CAB-ProvLegQP
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Transcript of Provincial Question Period

41st Parliament, 2nd Session

Thursday, October 26, 2017

The following is a partially edited transcript of Question Period.

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MPP Brown to Premier Wynne (Coteau) Re: Autism Services

>> PC Leader Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. It took hundreds and thousands of families with children with autism to convince this government that autism doesn't end at 5. Unfortunately right now, the government seems to have forgotten that autism doesn't end at school either. You know, the sad reality is that families who don't have the time, that are stretched thin, have to come to queen's park to protest. So my question is, after 14 years, after 14 long years, why can't this government finally support these families with children with autism?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, first of all let me say to the Ontario autism coalition welcome. Many of the people who are here today are people, Mr. Speaker, I've worked with for many years, from the time I was Minister of education and before actually, Mr. Speaker, when I was a school trustee. And I know that there are many issues that we have worked together on over the years. We have, as you know, Mr. Speaker, we have put \$500 million into autism services to create 16,000 new spaces and to reduce wait times, Mr. Speaker, because we knew that there were young kids languishing on a wait list not getting service when they needed it, Mr. Speaker, and not getting the appropriate service therefore. So, Mr. Speaker, we've done that but we know that there's more work to be done in the classroom. And, Mr. Speaker, this issue of how to deliver services in the classroom and make sure that we have the right -- in the right place, that's why we put a pilot project in place, Mr. Speaker. This is a discussion that --

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the -- Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. The Premier may say they're working with Ontario autism coalition but they've just given you a failing grade. They've said the support isn't adequate. Today's Ontario autism coalition released the results of an important survey. They

asked parents of school aged children with autism about their experiences, about the support they're getting from this government. 40% said that their child's potential placements were not thoroughly explained to them. 57% indicated they did not feel they had a choice when it came to their child's placement. 72%, Mr. Speaker, felt their child has not received the support at the level they need at school. That's astonishing. That's three out of four children saying they don't get the support they need from this government. So it's nice to say you're listening. Nice to say you're working with Ontario autism coalition, but their results, this survey says it's not -- So, Mr. Speaker, when can we get more than listening. When can we get more than saying you're going to work with them? When can we get results and real support for these families and these children?

>> Minister Michael Coteau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank parents, to thank the Ontario autism coalition for everyone who's here at the legislature today that have worked with us as a government to better position young people for success here in the province of Ontario. Mr. Speaker, we've been working tirelessly to put in a new system in place. We committed to putting in a new place, implementation of a new plan in the fall of this year, and full implementation of the plan in the spring. Mr. Speaker, we have a track record here in the legislature when it comes to supporting young people. Unlike the member opposite, the leader of the opposition, when you look at his track record, when it comes to supporting young people, I would think he gets a failure. He has not -- he's had opportunity -- he's had the opportunity to support families, to support children, and I'll talk a bit about his record in my supplemental.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. And this isn't the opposition's survey results. This isn't a partisan pitch. This is the Ontario autism coalition. And so rather than attack others, I would like the Premier herself to answer the substance of these concerns. Not only are they saying three quarters of students don't get the help in school they need. Another fact in the report read 75% of parents indicated that in the last year they had advocated for their child to receive support from an E.A.. Of those requests, 54% have been refused. The support's not there. And I know the convenient anticipates at Queen's Park is to attack others but the reality, Mr. Speaker, they've been in government for 14 years. For 14 years they've had the opportunity to support children with autism. So directly to the Premier Mr. Speaker -- This report is disappointing. What will the Premier promise us today she's going to do to support these children and support these families?

>> Minister Coteau: Mr. Speaker, here in Ontario, we have the best resources for families of children with autism. The member knows we need additional half a billion dollars to support young people here in the province. We have committed to regulating the sector to make sure young people are getting the best services possible. We are the government that have moved towards direct funding. Mr. Speaker, today there's announcement made a \$5 million investment to further support A.D.A. Training within schools. Mr. Speaker, when the member opposite had an opportunity to vote for a national strategy for autism as a federal member, he voted against it. When he had an opportunity to stand up and support families with bill 89, that supports young people by raising age of protection, they were nowhere to be seen. What are you doing to support young people here in the province of Ontario? I'd like to know your record.

MPP Brown (Smith) to Minister Thibeault Re: Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

>> PC Leader Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Since I can't get an answer on the government's cuts to autism services, let's try something different, Mr. Speaker. We just received copies of the long-term energy plan. And, Mr. Speaker, I can't find on what page includes the section on giving mega contracts to Liberal donors. We know that the auditor general said we overpaid by \$9.2 billion

our renewable energy. Of these mega contracts the companies got, they donated \$1.3 million to the Ontario Liberal party. So was the section on giving mega contracts to Liberal friends and insiders, was that section -- could the Premier please enlighten us?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very pleased to talk about the long-term energy plan that's talking about a plan that we've brought forward that's reducing rates for the people in this province by 25%, Mr. Speaker. This is the second plan that we have launched in like the last six months, Mr. Speaker, and I know we're still waiting for one from the opposition. But you know when we're talking about the benefits of this plan, it's actually bringing fairness and choice and innovation, Mr. Speaker. Innovation that's going to actually see ratepayers, both large and small, see their bills reduced, Mr. Speaker. See more jobs created in an innovative sector that's already created over 40,000 jobs. This plan, Mr. Speaker, is bringing forward prosperity for our province, making sure that we can continue to keep our G.H.G.S low, working with the ministry of environment and climate change to meet our climate change action plan goal. This plan, Mr. Speaker, is something that Ontarians should be proud of.

>> MPP Todd Smith: Thank you, Speaker. This long-term energy plan confirms that whaef we've said all along. After the next election, the Liberal electricity borrowing scheme gets wiped out. But there's \$40 billion borrowing scheme is going to cost ratepayers an extra \$4 billion long term because it was never, ever intended to be an electricity plan, Mr. Speaker. This is a reelection plan for Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals in Ontario. Speaker, the unfair hydro plan is yet another -- Speaker, the unfair hydro plan is another bad deal for Ontario that's going to drive up look trillsty costs even further. How much more does this Minister think Ontario ratepayers can afford on their electricity bills?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So when we look at the electricity price outlook, Mr. Speaker, we've brought down rates by 25%. That is actually clear, rates are down 25%. Then they come down a little bit more in 2018 and they're held to the cost of inflation for the three years after that, Mr. Speaker. Then as we sjd, just moments ago, Mr. Speaker, when we were talking about the long-term energy plan and talking about it through the media and to the people of Ontario, we're going to continue to take costs out of the system. We have examples of doing that, Mr. Speaker. Besides the 25% from the fair hydro plan, we actually did build new nuclear cutting out billions of costs. We didn't actually bring forward the lrp2 reducing billions of costs, Mr. Speaker, . We renegotiated the Samsung agreement. That's what you do, Mr. Speaker, is you find out. Ways to reduce costs when you have plans. On that side of the House, they don't have a plan and they don't have a clue either.

>> MPP Smith: Speaker, it took this government, it took this government almost a year to come up with this long-term energy plan. It was supposed to come out in December. Here we are, in late October, and we get a plan that really doesn't remove any costs from the system. This is a \$40 billion borrowing scheme. And the Liberals even managed to break a basic law of economics today. Demand is going to stay the same. Supply is going to stay the same. Prices, however, will shoot to new record highs after the next election. And that's even after they've cooked the books to make House holds smaller. Thank you, Speaker. Only in Liberal Ontario is this even possible. Mr. Speaker -- Speaker, everybody can see through the \$40 billion borrowing scam. They have to stop fudging the numbers. When are they going to get serious about --

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very clearly, Mr. Speaker, the opposition has no idea on what to do with this file. All they can do, Mr. Speaker, is stand up and complain. This is a plan that is bringing fairness and choice. It is bringing -- This is a plan that is bringing forward choice, Mr. Speaker. It's bringing forward fairness, and it's a real plan, a realistic plan that the people of Ontario can actually look at and help them understand where the electricity system, where the energy system is going, Mr. Speaker. On the other side, they haven't brought a thing forward, Mr. Speaker, not one thing that would actually do anything to lower rates, but only increase rates. We've brought forward the 25% reduction through the fair hydro plan. We've taken costs out of the system. We'll continue to roll up our sleeves and do more for the people of Ontario through this plan.

MPP Armstrong to Premier Wynne (Hoskins) Re: Long-Term Care Homes

>> MPP Teresa Armstrong: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday the long term care association confirmed that the Minister of health has been depth for three days that their long-term care homes in Toronto are looking to relocate out of the city. Whether or not these homes have filed the paperwork with the ministry, they have expressed their desire to relocate and they've done it publicly. Will the Minister of health now confirm, if he will, or will not let any of these homes shut down or relocate out of Toronto?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is going to want to comment. Let's just be clear that it is -- this is a societal concern that we all work with with the people who provide care for elderly people, particularly frail elderly who may need to be in a long-term care home, Mr. Speaker, or who may still want to stay home and need those services in their place of residence, Mr. Speaker. It is exactly what we are doing as a government. We are working with all of the providers, working with seniors' advocacy groups, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that we put in place the supports that people need. It is absolutely part of that discussion, Mr. Speaker, that beds are being upgraded across the province. There is money that's going into long-term care, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that those beds are upgraded. We do want to make sure that there are not just those beds upgraded but there are new beds in communities around the province, Mr. Speaker. So until there's a final proposal we're talking about hypotheticals.

>> MPP Armstrong: Speaker, denying what's happening publicly is not working with the people of the city of Toronto. The association's report notes that even the city of Toronto staff acknowledges the possibilities of homes closing or leaving. City staff said quote -- there's a significant risk in future years of long-term care homes closing or moving out of the city, end quote. With a wait list for care topping 32,000 people already and now the possibility of losing 1,800 spaces in Toronto, what is this Liberal government's plan to make sure every senior who needs care has a spot in long-term care homes?

>> Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the challenges laid out by the member opposite is exactly the challenge we are working on. We understand that there are risks, Mr. Speaker. We understand that there are risks in the aging population, Mr. Speaker. Many, many of us are working with our parents, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that they have the care that they needment we understand that solving the challenge that the member opposite has laid out is the responsibility. I would suggest of all of us. It is certainly the responsibility of our government. We are working with the long term care association, Mr. Speaker. We are working with providers to make sure that the scenario that the member opposite hypothetically has put forward does not happen, Mr. Speaker .

>> MPP Armstrong: Mr. Speaker, this Liberal government is the epitome of the queen of denial. The redevelopment issues with these homes in Toronto are not -- are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to problems in the long-term care system. Seniors are facing months of long wait lists just to get a bed and, when they finally do, they have to often face issues with safety and security, understaffing, conditions that do not allow them the care and support they deserve. And when they finally get a place, this don't even have the peace of mind of staying in the city where they get their long-term care beds. For far too long, this government has been ignoring this growing crisis. What is the Premier's plan to take care of our seniors, our grandparents and parents? She hasn't had one so far.

>> Minister Eric Hoskins: Well, once again, Mr. Speaker, the NDP is sowing the seeds of anxiety and fear. And I feel awful for those residents of the 20 long-term care homes. We have not -- I need to reassure them. I feel compelled to because of this narrative that they're trying to create. That not a single home in Toronto has applied to us to move their beds or their homes outside of Toronto, Mr. Speaker. In fact I met with the mayor of the city of Toronto yesterday and we both remarked on how the number of beds for long-term care in Toronto this year has actually increased, Mr. Speaker. And we're working with our partners. I appreciate the fact that the Ontario long term care association has released their report prebudget position yesterday I believe, Mr. Speaker, and I've gone through it. Very good ideas within that. We're working closely with all our partners. Unlike the NDP, who simply want to sow the fear and anxiety among Ontarians.

MPP Tabuns to Minister Thibeault Re: Long-Term Energy Plan

>> MPP Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, my question to the Premier. This morning the Premier released her long-term energy plan, but the people of Ontario don't need a fancy report to know what the Premier and her Liberal government are planning for their hydro bills. We already know. They're going to skyrocket. The plan confirms it in black and white. Ten years from now people will be paying 42% more every single month just to keep the lights on. The Premier's \$40 billion borrowing scheme has seen to that. Even when House holds use less power, her long-term energy plans say they'll pay still more. Can the Premier tell us why she's sticking to her \$40 billion borrowing scheme when her own long-term energy plan tells us that Ontarians will pay more because of it?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very pleased to talk about the long-term energy plan, the 25% reduction people are getting now, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to continue to see costs coming out of the system to lower that for our families and for our businesses even more, Mr. Speaker. I know the third party continues to make their numbers up, Mr. Speaker, and elevate what they're seeing as borrowing plans. They know those numbers are actually a lot lower than that, Mr. Speaker. It shows it directly in the long-term energy plan. But let's talk about some of the facts that this long-term energy plan is doing, Mr. Speaker. We're making sure that we're bringing forward lower costs for all businesses, for all families, for all farms in this province for that matter. That's being done through the fair hydro plan. We've already pulled costs out of the system. Not having to build new nukes, Mr. Speaker. Not having to bring forward procurement the second round of it. And renegotiating the Samsung contract are just three examples we can use of how we've taken costs out of the system. I'm looking forward to talking about market renewal in the supplementary.

>> MPP Tabuns: Again to the Premier, Speaker. Hydro rates have gone up 300% under the Liberals. They've gone up 50% under this Premier's watch alone. And now we know that in the next ten years people's bills will go from an already high average 127 bucks a month to an outrageous \$181 per month. The Premier's first two energy plans had no mention of her plan to sell off Hydro One, a disastrous decision. And this long-term plan is nothing more than a political document that sugar coats more bad news for Ontario ratepayers. The Premier didn't tell us she privatized Hydro One. People said no to privatization and she did it anyway. She let us down. What makes the Premier think that the people of Ontario give her any credibility on this file?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The only thing that this Premier has done is brought rates down, Mr. Speaker. Brought them down by 25%. Unlike, Mr. Speaker, what that party would propose to do, which is to nationalize Hydro One, spend tens of billions of dollars doing so, Mr. Speaker, and not saving a single penny on anyone's bills. You want to talk about Hydro One, Mr. Speaker? Let's talk about

the money that we've used, that we've been able to take and build infrastructure with, Mr. Speaker, thanks to the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One. \$13.5 billion in the gtha, go regional rail express. That's increasing transit, Mr. Speaker. I always thought the NDP Supported more transit. I guess they don't, Mr. Speaker. \$5.3 billion in the Eglinton crosstown L.R.T. Tripling the Ontario community infrastructure fund to \$300 million. \$1.4 billion in the Hurontario L.R.T. In Mississauga and and brampton. 1 billion in Ottawa's L.R.T. Of course the broadening and expansion of highway 69, Mr. Speaker, making sure that northern Ontario –

>> MPP Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. Again to the Premier. Hydro bills have skyrocketed under this Premier, and nothing in their long-term energy plan is going to change that. The people of Ontario don't need to hear any more about stretch goals from the Liberal government. Right now families are being forced to choose between paying their hydro bills and paying for their groceries. And all the Premier seems to care about is spending an extra \$4 billion on an accounting trick to hide the impact of her \$40 billion borrowing scheme. I guess we all have our priorities, Speaker. Why is the Premier's priority her reelection and not the people of this province?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The fair hydro plan took into consideration every single person in this province and brought forward relief for them, unlike their so-called pie-in-the-sky plan, Mr. Speaker, that didn't even include talking about reductions for first nations or talking about low-income individuals. Let's look at page 23 of the long-term energy plan, where it talks about distribution rate protection. The rrr, P program by rural and remote customers who face higher distribution costs compared to other areas. Mr. Speaker, that's a 40 to 50% reduction for people that live in the rural and northern parts of our province, again something that they didn't even address, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to a party that's actually bringing something for the people of Ontario, it's this government, not the two opposition parties that one doesn't have a plan. One makes it up as it goes along. We're actually bringing forward we will relief for all Ontarians, Mr. Speaker .

MPP Brown to Premier Wynne (Lalonde) Re: Correctional Services

>> PC Leader Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. I've spoken with corrections officers, nurses and other frontline correction staff across the province. Mr. Speaker, this is what I have heard. Jails are overcrowded. Cell block violence is a -- violence is and constant problem. Inmates are held in maximum security without access to rehabilitation programs. Assaults on corrections officers and staff have more than doubled, doubled in seven years. I actually met one correctional officer in Thunder Bay who got held hostage. And I know the government's saying everything is fine now but we have correctional officers here today to say it's not fine. It's not adequate. So, Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is when are they going to get serious about the crisis in corrections?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I know the Minister of community safety and correctional services will want to speak to supplementary. But I wanted to take an opportunity to say, Mr. Speaker, that quite the contrary of what the leader of the opposition has said. We don't think everything's fine, Mr. Speaker. We believe that the work that is done by the people who are in the gallery today is very hard work. It's very important work, Mr. Speaker. And I would say that, for decades has not actually received the attention that it needed to. That is a nonpartisan comment, Mr. Speaker. I think governments of all stripes have not paid attention to corrections in the way that we should, Mr. Speaker. I think there's a lot of work to be done. We have Howard safe who is already giving us advice, Mr. Speaker, on some of the directions that we should take. But I just want the people in this gallery to know that we understand that there is a lot to be done, that there are investments that need to be made. Interest there's

attention to the working conditions of people in our corrections institutes that need to be –

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. The Premier recognizes there's a crisis. Then fix it. If the Premier recognizes there's a problem, we need action. They've been in office for 14 years and they're having this awakening now that there's a crisis? It needs investment. There's a sense of urgency here and it's not just the crisis in corrections. In Ontario's probation and parole system. A joke, Mr. Speaker. Often the only contact between a criminal and a probation officer happens when the offender visits the probation office. We saw that smoking global TV exposé. So there's a broader crisis in -- shocking global TV exposé. I want to know from the Premier does she think it's acceptable talking about dangerous violent criminals and sex offenders on the loose without supervision, how do they justify this neglect? It was a year ago we had that global TV exposé. So my question very specifically to the Premier is this. When are they going to get serious about the inadequate resources in the parole system?

>> Minister Marie-France Lalonde: Where do you begin? I'll begin with saying thank you. Thank you to the men and women who work every day in our -- In our communities. But let's take a look at what the party opposite did in Ontario's correction system -- When they were -- Mr. Speaker, they looked at privatization of our correction system and I have to say visiting eight institutions over the past ten months, this is what I hear in our institutions, Mr. Speaker. And you know what? It was a cell privatization experiment in one of our jails. It was negotiated with bad faith with the public sector which resulted in strikes. Just in case it doesn't know in our jail and riots all over, Mr. Speaker. They left a system in need of infrastructure investment -- So, Mr. Speaker, we would think that the leader of the opposition would learn from the countless mistakes his party made in Ontario's correction system, but think again. Conservative --

MPP Taylor (Sattler) to Minister Hunter Re: Autism Services

>> MPP Monique Taylor: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier. Parents of children with autism and developmental disabilities are here, once again, to fight for the services that their children desperately need. When the government announced their new autism program, they knew it would put added pressure onto our school system, a system already struggling to cope with decades of chronic underfunding and cuts. Be gone by the Conservatives and continued for 14 years of Liberal government -- begun by Conservatives -- particularly to special education, but nothing, nothing has been done to prepare for that. And children with autism, yet again, are paying the price. Will the government commit to a comprehensive autism strategy that ensures children with autism get the services they need in an inclusive classroom setting?

>> Minister Mitzi Hunter: Thank you, Speaker. It's such an honour to rise in this House today, and I just want to welcome all of the family members, the students who are here today, the educators who are here today on behalf of the 20,000 students with autism in our school system. I know how hard the Ontario autism coalition has been working, Mr. Speaker. I know that I have been working with them along with the Minister responsible for children and youth services. And, Mr. Speaker, we're very committed as a government to providing for appropriate supports in our schools for students who have autism. It's something that we know is needed, and we've been doing that work, Mr. Speaker. In fact I just recently announced that we are beginning our pilot program that will see applied behaviour therapists being able to come right into schools to ease the transition. Seamless and integrated day for students who have autism. Mr. Speaker, of course there is more work that we need to do and that is exactly what we're doing to provide better supports for students who need it in our schools.

>> MPP Peggy Sattler: Again to the Premier. Speaker, almost one year later this Liberal government has failed to deliver its promise to create an education accessibility standard and has failed to provide the special education resources needed by students with autism. Chronic underfunding of special education that was started by the Conservatives have continued under the Liberals. Instead of increasing special education funding to actually meet the needs of students, this Liberal government has cut special education budgets even more, leading to an ongoing shortage of E.A.S, developmental service workers and other specialized staff in schools. Speaker, it's not A.B.A. Training for oh A.s that is just needed. It's more trained E.A.S. Will the Premier move forward immediately to develop an education accessibility standard and will she commit to an inclusive autism strategy in schools that addresses the educational as well as therapeutic needs of students with autism?

>> Minister Hunter: So, Mr. Speaker, the third party is asking for areas to improve education in Ontario that we are doing right now, Mr. Speaker. We have in fact trained 30,000 principals, teachers, education workers in applied behaviour therapy. What we've just announced, Mr. Speaker, is in addition to that specific customized -- Specific customized training for education assistants who work with students with autism. Mr. Speaker, as it relates to accessibility standards in our schools, that is something that we are already doing. The Premier has committed to that. We're working on that, Mr. Speaker. The Minister responsible for -- Mr. Speaker, our government has provided a 76% increase to students who need special education services in our schools.

MPP Vernile to Minister Thibeault Re: Long-Term Energy Plan

>> MPP Daiene Vernile: Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the Minister of energy. Constituents in my riding of Kitchener Centre often ask me about electricity prices. Many of them have come to me in recent months and have mentioned that their hydro bills have come down. The fair hydro plan lowered bills by an average of 25% for residential consumers and up to 500,000 small businesses and farms. I've also heard how they're benefitting from expanded programs such as the Ontario electricity support program, and there is the rural and remote ratepayers protection program. While the fair hydro plan keeps increases to inflation for four years, Speaker, the Minister has also said that the specifics of the long-term costs to our system would be addressed in the 2017 long-term energy plan. So, Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister, now that the long-term energy plan has been released -- Can you please explain how he's taking additional costs out of the system to keep prices low?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I want to thank the member from Kitchener Centre for the question, and of course for all the hard work that she does day in and day out in Kitchener on behalf of her constituents. You know, Mr. Speaker, our long-term energy plan delivering fairness and choice outlines additional work we will be undertaking to make our electricity system more cost effective and efficient. And that's continuing to prioritize affordability, Mr. Speaker, for all Ontario ratepayers. Our government has a history of effectively streamlining operations and taking costs out of the system. We deferred the cost of new nuclear. We actually renegotiated the Samsung agreement. We actually, you know, reduced the targets for renewable generation, Mr. Speaker. And these are tangible examples of how we've taken billions of dollars off of the electric trusty bills for ratepayers in this province. 2018 the long-term energy plan projected the -- in 2010, the average bill would be more than 200 bucks, Mr. Speaker. Today's plan is now projecting 2020 it will be below 130. That's a \$70 savings for people in Ontario.

>> MPP Vernile: Thank you to the Minister for that answer. He's right to point out we've already done a lot in reducing costs. He mentioned renegotiating Samsung agreements. That saves people in Ontario -- So

as I was saying, Speaker, renegotiating the Samsung agreement saved people in Ontario \$3.7 billion. Reducing feed-in tariff prices saved 1.9 billion. Suspending large renewable procurement saved \$3.8 billion. And deferring the construction costs of new nuclear reactors at Darlington, that would save families \$15 billion. Additionally, Speaker, the Ontario energy board has a very strong record of not giving utility companies all that they ask for. So, Speaker, when you add this all up there are real savings. But unlike the members opposite. Our government is also focused on a realistic plan for the future. Could the Minister please tell us more on how he is going to be reducing electricity costs in the future?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thanks, Speaker. Thanks again for the question. Our government acknowledged that we did the right thing by ensuring we had a clean and green energy supply. How we went about implementing those policies led to sub optimal outcomes, Mr. Speaker. Therefore we took an in-depth look at ensuring we're procuring electricity generation in the right way. The ISO is already hard at work in renewing our market mechanism to create a more efficient and transparent system for procuring electricity generation. Market renewal is a major pillar of our 2017 long-term energy plan, Mr. Speaker, and it sets out to fix the foundation of our electricity system and takes a technology neutral approach to new procurements through an incremental capacity option. That means that any time we need to secure new supply resources, we will choose the most cost-effective option. Independent analysis suggests that about \$5 billion in savings, in system savings Mr. Speaker -- Which result from implementing market renewal in Ontario, and it's through this mechanism we will continue to drive costs down in the future for Ontario ratepayers, Mr. Speaker, both large and small.

MPP Fedeli to Minister Naqvi Re: Gas Plant Trial

>> MPP Vic Fedeli: Thank you and good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Premier. The gas plant trial of two former Liberal aides heard testimony yesterday that was described as, quote, a bombshell. I.T. Expert Rolf Git testified the province's chief information officer, David Nicholl, didn't seek access just to some computers in the Premier's office during her transition. He wanted broad and extraordinary access to all the computers in the Premier's office. Git's testimony contradicts the version given by Nichol earlier at trial and in sworn appearance at the justice policy hearings. Mr. Nicholls, to this day, remains the province's chief information officer. Speaker to the Premier. Should Ontarians be worried that our data is still at risk?

>> Minister Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker. I just want to remind member that again we have to be very careful. This matter is very much as we know before the court and we have to respect the process. Speaker, our government takes our record keeping obligations very seriously. We are committed to being open, accountable and transparent. We promised to open up the government completely and we've done so in an unprecedented degree, Speaker. In our report -- in her report privacy commissioner has credited the government for improving record keeping. We sent a directive to all staff. We have developed mandatory training programs. We have appointed chiefs of staff accountable for record keeping. We have improved archiving requirements and we have passed the accountability act which prohibits the willful deletion of records and creates a penalty for doing so.

>> MPP Fedeli: Back to the Premier. Mr. Mick Kol asked for sweeping elevated rights that allowed -- Mr. Nicholls -- the wiping of data of all computers in the Premier's office. He left a, quote, erroneous impression with the secretary of Cabinet which led him to be granted that access. Speaker, there are still people here today working in Liberal offices who admitted deleting files. This was designed to deliberately thwart the public's right to information. Continuing with this pattern today, the energy Minister still hasn't turned over all his emails due to the auditor general. Now we see the credibility of the chief information

officer is in doubt. Speaker, to the Premier, why should anyone -- Believe a word you say with your history of dodge, deny and delete?

>> Minster Naqvi: Speaker, I just -- I -- I just want to say to the member he should be very careful in how he is trying to apply a set of proceedings that's taking place in a court of law, as we speak, to the Premier of the day today. Speaker, the case relates to the former Premier of the province of Ontario. It does not deal with the current Premier. To the member, he needs to be very careful when he uses the term "Premier" and poses his commentary in this House. Speaker, let me be very clear. This Premier, the current Premier of Ontario, have taken unprecedented steps in making sure that the government is transparent and accountable and, Speaker, the information the privacy commissioner has credited the government -- As I mentioned earlier in my question we have taken specific steps to insure that there is accurate record keeping in the government.

MPP Natyshak to Minister Lalonde Re: Correctional Services

>> MPP Taras Natyshak: Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Speaker, today we're joined by some of the 5,000 dedicated correction and probation and parole professionals that are here today in the gallery. I want to thank them for the work that they do. Speaker, they're here to keep the Liberal government to its word. Last year the Liberal government spent \$50 million to prevent a strike in our province's jails that never happened. You essentially created a crisis on top of an ongoing crisis. \$50 million later, Speaker, and this Liberal government made a promise to recognize that frontline correctional staff are essential and valued members of our public service. Yet despite these promises to hire new staff, the daily staffing complement has not increased at all. Speaker, what will the Premier tell correctional services professionals today? In the thoe did -- -- and the thousands at that they represent. About what they should expect about how they're valued and essential to solving the crisis in corrections?

>> Minister Marie-France Lalonde: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for the question, because again gives me an opportunity to thank our wonderful correctional staff who are here and across Ontario for all their hard work and dedication. We had a very productive meeting this morning and I look forward actually to continuing these important discussions. As I've said, Mr. Speaker, I visited eight jails, eight of our institutions in the past ten months as Minister and I've seen firsthand the high calibre of the individuals who actually work in our correctional facilities. And I also attended -- Mr. Speaker I had the great privilege of attending the latest graduation of our correctional officers in Hamilton, 211 new recruits coming to our work force every day in our institutions. And oh, man are they eager to start working and taking care and caring for our inmates. You know, our government is committed -- To the transformation of our correction system and we will continue to work with frontline staff, Mr. Speaker, and our correction partners to ensure lasting change.

>> MPP Natyshak: Speaker, what these professionals need and deserve is not more platitudes from the government. They need action today, Speaker. Speaker, understaffing, overcrowding, broken and badly planned facilities procured from private sector deals, mothballed nursing stations and only in the case of the south block detention centre 1 nurses of a complement of 21 that they need to operate that facility. \$50 million to avoid a strike. One report and nearly daily headlines about jail deaths, violence, and this government is no closer to addressing the problem. Speaker, I have heard that those that are closest to the problem are the closest to the solution. Is this Premier as committed today to listen to the frontline staff in our correction and community safety systems, the people that deal with it every day, as she was to throwing \$50 million to the wind hoping that the problem would go away?

>> Minister Lalonde: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Definitely we are listening to our frontline staff. And, Mr. Speaker, are there issues within our system? Yes. I think we -- our government is not shying away and certainly as a Minister I'm not shying away from that. But this is exactly why we are implementing the greatest change to corrections in generations, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Howard safer fully recognized our firm commitment correctional reform and will continue to work closely with our front line staff and other partners as this government brings forward real change. Whether it is he through enhanced mental health training to all staff or 27 hours 7 day a week nursing to oversight provision of health care services to the ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, or through new correctional legislation this fall. To further -- our correctional reform, Mr. Speaker ., We are committed to working with our frontline staff. I committed today and we will continue.

MPP Qaadri to Minister Coteau Re: Ontario Indigenous Children and Youth Strategy

>> MPP Shafiq Qaadri: Speaker, thank you. [Speaking in French] Voice of Translator: Good morning. [End of Translation] Minister of child and youth services. To make childhood for those in care fair, equitable, just and compassionate. Nevertheless we see a disproportionately higher number of indigenous number of indigenous in care. That includes métis, first nations and inuit. I believe all members of this House value signing of a treaty in Kenora with the grand council. My question is will the Minister share details of this agreement with the grand council treaty three?

>> Minister Michael Coteau: I want to thank the member from Etobicoke North for the question. Mr. Speaker, over the summer I was in Kenora and I had the opportunity to sit down with grand council treaty three and we signed anticipate agreement that would strengthen the relationship between Ontario and ground council treaty three., Mr. Speaker, this was an historic agreement. It was the first time that any government in this country has begun the negotiation to acknowledge the rightful jurisdiction of child and family well-being services through communities. This agreement reaffirms our commitment to work together to improve outcomes and opportunities for anishinabe children and youth in treaty three territory. We're doing this through the implementation, the co-implementation I should say, Mr. Speaker, of the Ontario children indigenous and youth strategy, a key response to the youth and reconciliation commission's call to action. Together with our indigenous partners we focus on outcomes and opportunities of children, youth and families here in Ontario.

>> MPP Qaadri: Thank you, Minister. I think all of us appreciate that working under the leadership of Premier Wynne that you're working on different initiatives in the child welfare sector as part of our province's committed to reconciliation and moving to a fair and more equitiesable system. I believe collaborative work being done on the Ontario children and youth strategy is extremely important and I ask Minister -- Minister -- [Speaking in French] Voice of Translator: Can you say further what measures or government has already taken? And merci, miigwetch. [End of Translation]

>> Minister Coteau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again thank you to the member for the question. As initial investment in the strategy, we're addressing the link between violence against indigenous women and the overrepresentation of indigenous children and youth in the child welfare and youth justice systemful through family well-being program we're providing \$80 million over three years to address the issue at a minimum 220 family well-being workers are being hired to deliver culturally grounded and community based programming. Indigenous communities have identified how family well-being workers can best deliver this programming. As well they have identified how workers need to deliver more safe places

where women, children and youth can receive and access culturally appropriate services and support. We can ensure indigenous communities across Ontario leading programs that best suit their needs, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MPP Gelinas to Minister Hoskins Re: Aboriginal Cultural Security Program

>> MPP France Gelinas: Thank you, Speaker. [Speaking in French] Voice of Translator: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. The Aboriginal cultural security program for health care professionals is excellent. I believe that the training will help us to build a health care system that is more appropriate with respect to culture for the Aboriginals of the province. Why is this program not available in French? [End of Translation]

>> Minister Eric Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree with the member opposite that this is a critically important initiative that this government has undertaken. In fact we are demonstrating leadership across the country to provide that culturally safe -- that competency training, safe and cultural competency training for our frontline health care workers and our administrators across this province. In fact over 8,000 health care workers and MD ain irrelevant -- administrators have already completed this training. Of course it's a program we developed in close co-operation with our partners, first nations communities themselves and first nations leadership, and we continue to advance and develop and roll out this program, and I'm happy to speak with the member opposite in terms how we can ensure that it's available. Full complement of health care workers across this province.

>> MPP Gelinas: [Speaking in French]. Voice of Translator: I think Minister might take into consideration some first nations members speak French and that many health care professionals that work with first nations also speak French. When will the Minister of health correct his mistake? When will he respect the French language services act and make sure that this program is available in French? Merci. [End of Translation]

>> Minister Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite and I are absolutely aligned that this is a program that needs to be available to all the health -- all health care workers across this province, including in French, Mr. Speaker, for those that that is their first language or prefer to receive instruction in French, Mr. Speaker. So I'm -- I know that this is a program that we funded it and announced it earlier this year. So it is a program, despite the fact that we've already trained 8 though frontline health care workers and administrators, it is still a program which we are continuing to expand as we roll it out across the province. But we have the same intent and commitment as the member from the third party.

MPP Des Rosiers to Minister Albanese Re: Islamic Heritage Month

>> MPP Nathalie Des Rosiers: [Speaking in French] Voice of Translator: My question is for the Minister of civic affairs and immigration. [End of Translation] Canadian communities has had as much richness to Ontario's cultural fabric. Indeed the member for Ottawa South and myself had the opportunity to visit with the apar community last weekend and we saw first hand how rich their culture was. And we know as well that the Muslim community has contributed enormously in medicine, in literature, in math, in science, in law as well. This October is the first islamic heritage month in Ontario. Last year all three parties agreed to pass this legislation proclaiming October as islamic heritage month. Can the Minister explain how the legislation provides Ontarians the opportunity to celebrate important contribution of Canadians practising the Muslim faith?

>> Minister Laura Albanese: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the member from Ottawa- Vanier for her question. Diversity has always played an important part in Ontario's culture and heritage. Our province is home to more than 600,000 muslims. Some recent immigrants, others with deep roots in Ontario. In my riding of York South- Weston I have the distinct honour to represent and serve a vi Brant Muslim community alongside Canada's first ever Minister of somali descent. Mr. Speaker, in celebrating islamic heritage month, the province of Ontario recognizes the significant contributions muslims have made and continue to make to Ontario's cultural and social fabric and prosperity. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week that contribution was celebrated as the Premier hosted an islamic heritage month reception with community leaders in mississauga.

>> MPP Des Rosiers: [Speaking in French] Voice of Translator: Thank you. I would like to thank the Minister for Hess response. [End of Translation] Government be committed to educating Ontarians about the history, heritage and culture of Canadians of the Muslim faith, but we know there continues to be systemic racism in this system and we know because we see it every day that although we have made progress on diversity and inclusion, there's still a lot of work to do. Indeed I think this afternoon I will be speaking to increasing human rights framework to support new marginalized groups. And last year, I had the privilege of putting forward a motion condemning all forms of Islam phobia. Mr. Speaker, I'd really like the Minister to tell us what the government is doing to address systemic racism, including islamophobia, across the province.

>> Minister Albanese: Once again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member from Ottawa- Vanier for her question and her advocacy. Islamic heritage month is not only an opportunity to educate future generations about Ontario's rich history but also to tackle Islam phobia. Recognizing that systemic racism continues to create Barriers that lead to unfair outcomes for racialized and I think digenous people in Ontario, our Premier appointed the Honourable Michael coteau as the Minister responsible for anti-racism. The directorate aimed to increase public awareness of racism in order to create a more inclusive province and applies an anti-racism lens in developing, implementing and evaluating government policies, programs and services. Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to a society. Where everyone can live free of the fear of racism, hate speech and violence.

MPP Scott to Minister Sousa Re: Horse Racing Industry

>> MPP Laurie Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of finance. It's now clear that this government is continuing its all-out attack on horse racing in this province. First the government suddenly cancelled the slots at racetracks program that helps to support the industry for years, a decision that led to the loss of thousands of rural jobs and the deaths of thousands of horses. Now, for the second year in a row, kawartha downs in my riding was denied an application for additional racing dates. This is a rural racetrack trying to make things work despite this government's attack on the industry. But they still

get shot down. How does the Minister expect tracks like Kawartha Downs to succeed when they have both hands tied behind their backs?

>> Minister Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question because we are very concerned about the horse racing industry and sustainability over the long term is why we made a commitment to provide for \$100 million more to support the horse racing deliberately and specifically. And certainly the member opposite makes reference to the Ontario racing commission's decisions and we are going to be meeting with them. I know my colleague, the Minister of business, small business will also be in touch in respect to how to persuade and support the industry further. Horse racing in our province is one of the most vibrant in North America. We are continuing to support them, as we must, to support that industry and support the horses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> MPP Scott: Well, it was one of the most vibrant in North America. It isn't now. Last month the government's special advisor on horse racing resigned calling on the government to, and I quote, continue to fight for the small regional tracks as they are the development ground of horses, drivers and owners. They are important to their communities and are a vital part of the ongoing success of the industry. Unfortunately this government is busy doing the exact opposite. They say one thing on this file and do another. The rural affairs Minister pretends to be concerned about the price -- crisis situation affecting Kawartha Downs, while at the same time allowing the government and its agencies to quietly kill this racetrack. This is this government that caused the current crisis, and it is their responsibility to fix the mistakes they have made. Will the Minister finally present a real plan to support this industry -- Will the Minister finally present a real plan to support this industry or is he happy just to watch the horse racing die

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>> Minister Sousa: Mr. Speaker, let me be very, very clear. The Minister of rural affairs, the Minister of small business is advocating and fighting for the horse racing industry for some time now. We're very proud of this man for all that he has done and proud of this Premier who stood and fought for the industry, recognizing that it was lacking transparency. The funding wasn't going to where it needed to be. It was going to big shots in the you states, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are providing supports for the horse racing industry, managed by the horse racing industry, and it's them that matter to us, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite are making claims that would continue to allow for a lack of transparency and lack of controls. The horse racing industry provides the controls. We're providing support on an ongoing basis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Fife to Minister Del Duca Re: GO Transit Services

>> MPP Catherine Fife: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question's to the Premier. Earlier this month, fly G.T.A. Airlines announced starting November 6th they'll be offering flights from Toronto's Billy Bishop airport to Kitchener- Waterloo. The 18-minute flight will cost \$130 one way. For everyday commuters spending \$260 per day for timely transportation is unreasonable. Effective transportation between Toronto and Waterloo region should not just be for the wealthy. Residents of Kitchener- Waterloo have been waiting on this government to provide them with all-day two-way go for years. First it was promised in five years. That was the infamous bullet train promise. Now we have been told to wait until 2024. This government's lack of serious movement on transit to the region means that we have two options. We spend hours on the 401 in traffic or we take an infrequent slow inconsistent G.O. Train. In fact on its way to Toronto our own mayor of Kitchener. Spent two and a half hours on the 401. When will this government fully commit and honour your promise. Two-way all-day —

>> Minister Steven Del Duca: Thanks very much, Speaker. I thank the member for her question. Seems to be a lot of confusion in the NDP Caucus about this. I don't know why, Speaker mentioned over the last number of years, our Premier, our millimetres from Waterloo region like the Minister of natural resources and forestry and member from Kitchener Centre have pushed very hard, Speaker, and shown decisive leadership to make sure that we do deliver by 2024 on our commitment for G.O. Regional express rail, Speaker. Just a few days ago the Premier was in Waterloo to talk about a very exciting project. High-speed rail, Speaker. When the leader of the NDP was in southwestern Ontario, it was completely unclear whether she supported moving forward with high speed rail. We're going to deliver go regional express rail. We're going to deliver high-speed rail, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to ignore the NDP. Like the people of this province have consistently for more than a decade. Thank you, Speaker